

3/12/22

Dear Judiciary Committee,

I am writing today in strict **opposition** to SB.16 and HB.5416, and writing in **support** of SB. 388, HB. 5415, and HB. 5412.

Nine years ago, I testified at the “Gun Violence Prevention Working Group Public Hearing” as a young criminal justice major opposing the “high capacity magazine” and “assault” weapon ban. I cited the facts that these proposed laws would not deter criminals, would only hurt law abiding gun owners, and infringe on the constitutional rights of Connecticut residents. There were many testimonies that day (and night) of residents providing sound logic and data on why that proposed legislation would not work. The legislature pushed that bill through anyway crying that it would reduce so called gun violence in our state. Well guess what, it didn’t. Here we are nearly a decade later and criminals are still getting illegal guns and still committing crimes with them, not deterred by or following any laws. Only the legal gun owners were limited in what they can own to protect themselves and only the legal gun owners had their rights infringed.

SB. 16 will prohibit firearms on public transportation. I ask, what about the young mother traveling alone with her child through crime ridden areas who cannot carry her firearm on the bus or her walk to and from the bus? According to the latest FBI Unified Crime Report (UCR) (2020) the number one location for violent crime offenses in CT is on the “highway/alley/street/sidewalk”. We know criminals will not follow these laws, so are you really going to disarm the most vulnerable? SB. 16 greatly restricts CT “others”, a weapon used so infrequently in violent crime that it doesn’t even have a category on the FBI’s UCR for violent crime statistics. In fact, the number one weapon used for violent crime in CT on the latest FBI UCR (2020) was a “knife/cutting instrument” at 1,458 violent offenses then followed (way behind) by firearms at 816 offenses. That is nearly twice as much violent crime in which a knife was used as opposed to a gun. Why would you not try to ban the knives if solving violent crime was really the objective? What the numbers don’t reveal is what the gun was used for in violent crime statistics. If the victim used a gun against an attacker, it is still listed in the statistic as a gun being involved in the offense, even though it was used in self-defense. If a victim shoots and kills somebody who charged at them with a knife it is still considered a death caused by a firearm. The statistics don’t tell the story and without context cannot identify the true problem which are not weapons but the criminals who use them. We need to enforce the laws we already have on the books and actually hold these criminals responsible for their actions.

Limiting the number of pistols and revolvers purchased by law abiding gun owners, as outlined in HB. 5416, will **not** reduce these violent offenses. This bill assumes that criminals who commit these violent offenses follow legal channels to obtain their firearms, they do not. There is no data that shows a correlation with number of firearms legally purchased and violent crime. This will only hurt the law-abiding gun owners exercising their constitutional rights.

I ask that the committee instead looks at approving SB. 388, HB. 5415, and HB. 5412. These bills will do more in preventing violent crimes and will further support constitutional rights. SB. 388 will support the victims of violence by allowing them to stand their ground and defend themselves in their dwelling, place of work, or in their cars. The law now requires a potential victim to retreat and leans on the side of the aggressor. Last November an 82-year-old man in Boston was seriously injured when a group of 30-40 dirt bike and ATV riders surrounded his vehicle and beat him. Under current CT law this man would be required to retreat. Under proposed SB.388 this man would have had the legal backing to defend himself and avoid possible fatal injury. This bill would also help victims of domestic violence. The Family Violence Prevention Fund found that 74% of working women who were battered are harassed by their partners while they are at work. Additionally, in 2000 the US Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics found the second leading cause of on-the-job death to be homicide. They also found 25,000 annual sexual assaults occurring in the workplace as well as over one million instances of stalking. Under SB. 388 these women would be able to defend themselves in the workplace and drive this crime statistic down. SB. 388 would also help to curb workplace violence and could prevent tragedies such as the FEDEX mass shooting last April in Indianapolis that killed 8 from happening in CT. Any of these 8 victims would have been able to defend themselves and could of neutralized the aggressor, preventing further tragedy. HB. 5412 would accomplish the same objective in houses of worship.

Additionally, I support HB. 5415 allowing the transfer of **legally** possessed “assault weapons” and “high-capacity magazines”. The key word in this bill is **legally**, this would take some restrictions off legal guns owners and give them the ability to transfer their property.

We call ourselves the constitution state, yet we adhere to it the least. We can change that, protect victims of violence, and support constitutional rights by **opposing** SB. 16, HB. 5416, and **supporting** SB. 388, HB. 5412, and HB. 5415.

Thank you for your time,

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